

The Ripon City Plan – A Progress Report

Following last month's article reminding you what the City Plan is all about, this month we focus on the work to date and also outline what we still need to do before we can progress to a community referendum.

Work on the Ripon City Plan began when a number of the city's organisations agreed that they wanted a Neighbourhood Plan to enable the people that live in Ripon to have a greater say in the future of the city.

To get things rolling the Ripon City Plan Working Group was formed to carry out this work, comprising of a small number of volunteers and the City Development Manager reporting to a committee of Ripon City Council comprising of six councillors and seven community representatives.

Following the formal designation of the Ripon Parish as the Neighbourhood Plan Area in December 2012, we held our "How Could Ripon Be Better for You?" consultation, which helped us to identify the key issues for the Ripon City Plan. Taking advice from representatives of various organisations, discussing particular issues with our focus group and gathering various pieces of evidence enabled us to publish our preliminary draft Ripon City Plan in September 2014 and seek your views about our ideas.

We were delighted that the vast majority of respondents supported our proposals with 92% saying "Yes" when asked, "Overall, do you support the proposals contained in the preliminary draft Ripon City Plan?" This suggests our plan is seeking to deliver the future that many of you wish to see for our city. This is because we have listened to what you have told us and our preliminary draft Ripon City Plan concentrates on the areas where improvement is necessary and we believe is deliverable between 2015 and 2029, which is the lifetime of the plan.

In this period we know that the City will have some serious challenges to face, including the regeneration of the Deverell and Claro Barracks sites, which will be vacated during this period (although exactly when currently remains far from clear); the need to strengthen and evolve the City Centre; the need to provide new homes; and the need to look at how to improve the highway infrastructure to remove traffic from the City Centre. The Ripon City Plan provides a unique opportunity for a locally-led strategic plan to address all of these issues and others, in a comprehensive and joined-up way.

Since the consultation closed we have spent time analysing your consultation responses and starting to produce our draft Ripon City Plan, which outlines all of the policies to deliver our proposals. Whilst, as highlighted, there was a good deal of support for our proposals, there were also a small number of particular issues that you raised, which we are considering further and gathering more data on.

Foremost amongst these concerns was the proposal for a new road linking Mallorie Park Drive and Studley Road and the deliverability of this. In trying to make Ripon better connected and remove traffic from the City Centre there are plenty of constraints and no easy solutions. Previously, the football club have expressed an interest in housing on their current site and this may come back on to the agenda again before 2029. As the City Plan Team, we think it is right for the long-term future

of the city, to say that if this were to happen then the opportunity for a new link road should not be lost by piecemeal development.

Whilst we have made significant progress, there is still a great deal of work to do. Looking ahead, we are currently finalising our policies and our evidence documents to enable us to publish the final draft Ripon City Plan and again we will want your comments and views about this. If there is a high degree of support, we will then seek to formally submit the draft Ripon City Plan to Harrogate Borough Council as the local planning authority. They will hold their own consultation and organise an independent examination of the draft Ripon City Plan to ensure that it complies with a number of requirements before a community referendum can be held and, if supported by a majority, the Plan brought into force.

If you require any further information, please contact the Ripon City Plan Team:
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